

Canada do Monte



A decade after launching Fitapreta Vinhos in Alentejo, António Maçanita and two partners founded the Azores Wine Company on Pico, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The project emerged from their work recovering the indigenous Terrantez do Pico grape and António's long family ties to the islands. Their first bottling quickly drew international attention, earning a top Wine Spectator score and a feature in the 2016 article "Breaking the Mold."

The team now farms 100 hectares of extremely low yielding, walled vineyards on Pico and sources fruit from another 30 hectares across the archipelago, including DOP Graciosa and São Miguel. Sites range from sea level to 500 meters in altitude, with vines up to 80 years old. António describes the region's volcanic landscape as the source from which "these singular, saline wines are born, or should we say, erupt."

Pico's growing conditions are some of the most extreme in the world. Vines sit in the volcano's rain shadow, protected only by 500 year old lava stone currais from powerful Atlantic winds and salt spray. For more than five centuries, vineyards have been planted directly in volcanic rock cracks less than 50 meters from the ocean, where even "the crabs singing" becomes part of the environment. After phylloxera and oidium devastated the islands in the 19th century, only a few pockets of vines survived thanks to stubborn growers, laying the groundwork for today's revival.

WHAT MAKES THIS WINE UNIQUE?: Canada do Monte comes from one of Pico's oldest surviving vineyard pockets, where vines have been planted in volcanic rock cracks less than 50 meters from the Atlantic for more than 500 years. These 60 to 80 year old vines grow in solid lava stone. Extreme exposure to salt spray, wind, and bare volcanic rock produces tiny yields and an intensely maritime character, defined by salinity, iodine, and tension. This site is a rare living record of Pico's ancestral viticulture.

RATING HISTORY: 2023 95+WA; 2021 95WA; 2020 94+WA

GRAPE: A field blend dominated by Arinto dos Açores with small amounts of Verdelho, Alicante Branco, and Boal, reflecting the traditional mixed-planting heritage of Pico's old vineyards.

PAIRING SUGGESTIONS: Ideal with shellfish and iodine rich fish. The wine's density and concentration also pair well with richer white meats with crisped fat, including suckling pig or pork belly.

VINIFICATION AND AGING: Hand picked grapes are sorted and directly pressed. Juice is cold decanted for 12 hours and fermented with indigenous yeasts. First presses ferment in horizontal stainless steel tanks, forty five percent of the blend. Second presses ferment in three year old French oak barrels, fifty five percent of the blend. The wine ages 15 months on fine lees without batonnage.

PRODUCTION: 1,666 bottles

LOCATION, SOIL, CLIMATE: Produced in D.O. Pico. The vineyard sits 580 meters from the sea on solid lava stone soils formed 500 to 2,000 years ago. Old vines between 60 and 80 years of age grow in rock crevices shaped by Atlantic exposure, volcanic geology, and minimal soil depth.

TASTING NOTES Yellow citrus straw color with aromas of iodine, salt, and linden. Concentrated, dense attack on the palate with driving acidity through the finish. Pronounced salinity and iodine, a vivid impression described as a "slap of sea."

ALCOHOL CONTENT: 12%

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